



# Press Release

Lake County Sheriff's Office  
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**Daniel A. Dunlap**  
Sheriff

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## Press Release

*Leroy Township Identity Fraud Case*  
May 10, 2011

On August 21, 2010, Patrick Saffron, age 66, of Paine Road in Leroy Township, died in Cleveland of natural causes. Saffron lived as a recluse and his only family was his brother, Robert Saffron of Wisconsin. Saffron's friend, Richard Bell, age 52, of Carter Road in Leroy Township, met Saffron as they shared an interest in raising pigeons. In October of 2010, the Lake County Sheriff's Office was made aware of potential crimes involving the estate and property of Patrick Saffron after his death. It was alleged that shortly after the death of Patrick Saffron, his friend Richard Bell was observed coming home with new pieces of property such as computers, home furnishings, snow blower, riding lawn tractor, clothing and other articles of property which he could not afford. It was also alleged that Bell had found a safe which belonged to Saffron after he entered Saffron's home without permission and was in possession of nearly \$40,000.00 in US Savings Bonds, which belonged to Saffron. Information received indicated that Bell was taking measures to assume the identity of Saffron in an effort to cash the savings bonds.

As the result of a search warrant at the Bell residence and subsequent investigation by detectives at the LCSO, it was determined that Richard Bell had compromised Saffron's financial accounts and committed other crimes against Saffron after his death. It was determined that over a two (2) month period of time, Richard Bell had charged nearly \$25,000.00 on Saffron's credit card for personal purchases, transferred nearly \$19,000.00 from bank accounts, as Bell posed as Saffron to the bank in an effort to make payments on the Saffron's credit card which he was using, stole a \$2,000.00 lawn tractor, stole a \$1,300.00 snow blower, \$2,000.00 in cash from the Saffron home along with a safe containing approximately \$40,000.00 in US Savings Bonds and financial account information. An additional \$9,000.00 in bank transfers to a checking account which belonged to Saffron was also discovered. Bell also forged checks in the name of Saffron which were cashed and totaled \$8,750.00. At the conclusion of the investigation, it was determined that Bell had compromised the financial accounts of Patrick Saffron in an amount of just over \$105,000.00. Bell was recently indicted by the Lake County Grand Jury on several felony charges.